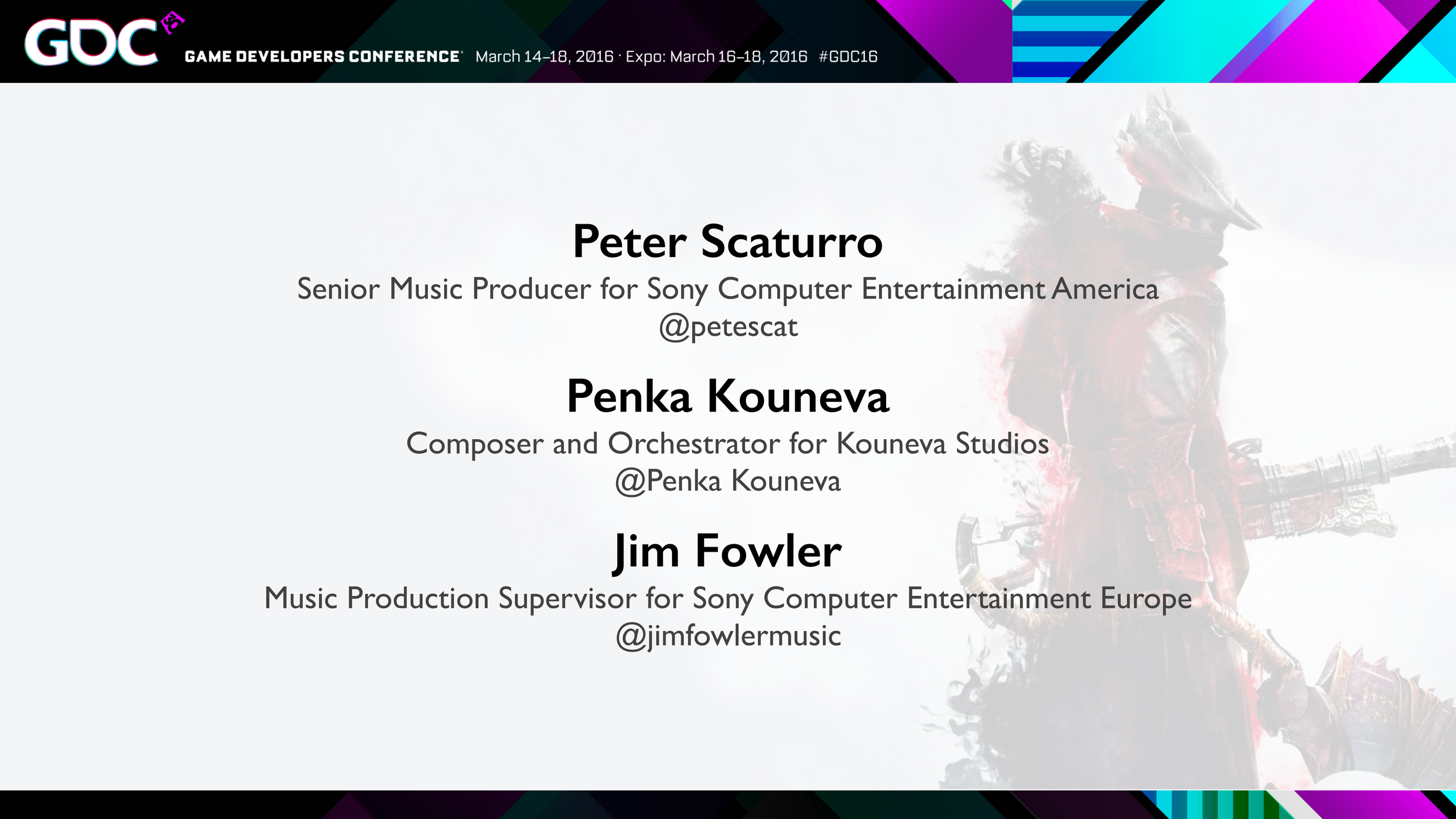
# The Gothic Horror Music of Bloodborne

**Peter Scaturro · Penka Kouneva · Jim Fowler**
Music Production for Sony Computer Entertainment

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® March 14–18, 2016 · Expo: March 16–18, 2016 #GDC16

UBM




## Peter Scaturro

Senior Music Producer for Sony Computer Entertainment America

@petescat

## Penka Kouneva

Composer and Orchestrator for Kouneva Studios

@Penka Kouneva

## Jim Fowler

Music Production Supervisor for Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

@jimfowlermusic

- 6 Composers
- 130 Minutes of Music
- Production on 3 Continents
- 2 ½ Years in the Making
- 5 Sony Campuses

# FROM SOFTWARE

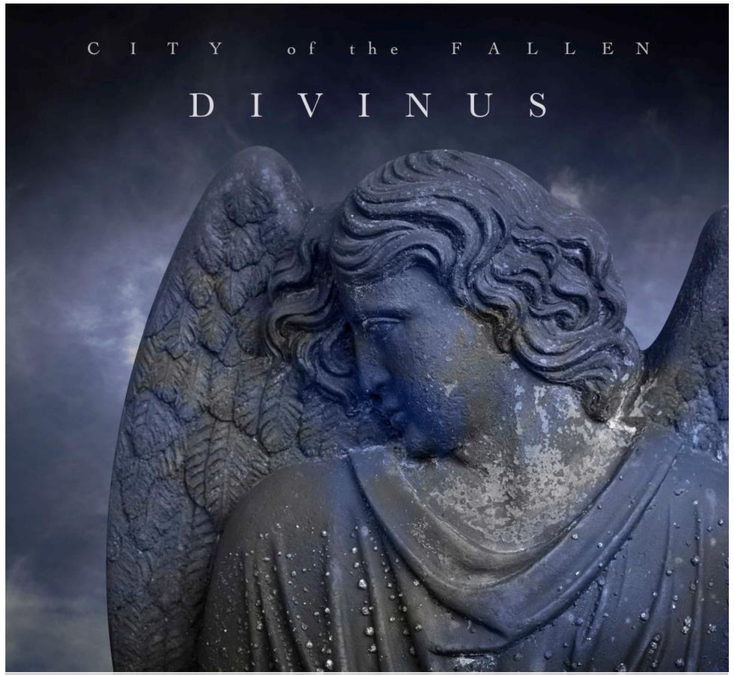
# JAPAN Studio

Keiichi Kitahara
Audio Director for Sony Japan Studio
JAPAN Studio

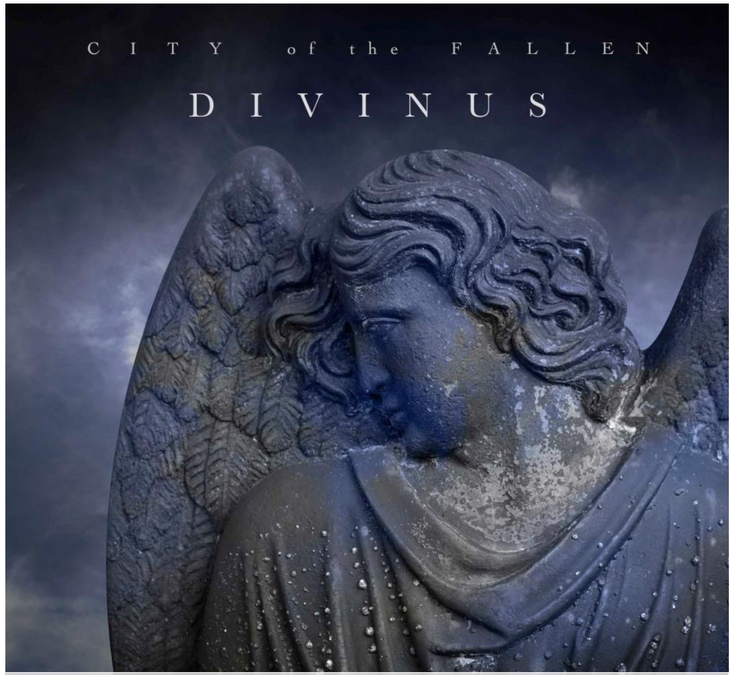
# GOALS?

Keiichi Kitahara
Audio Director for Sony Japan Studio

# FROM SOFTWARE



Ryan Amon


C I T Y of the F A L L E N
D I V I N U S

Ryan Amon

Michael Wandmacher

Cris Velasco

Tsukasa Saitoh

Yuka Kitamura

Nobuyoshi Suzuki

## Defining the Sound

# What is Gothic Victorian?

- Full String & Brass Sections
- Featured Solo Strings
- String Quartet
- Solo Voice
- Choir
- Piano / Celeste
- Percussion

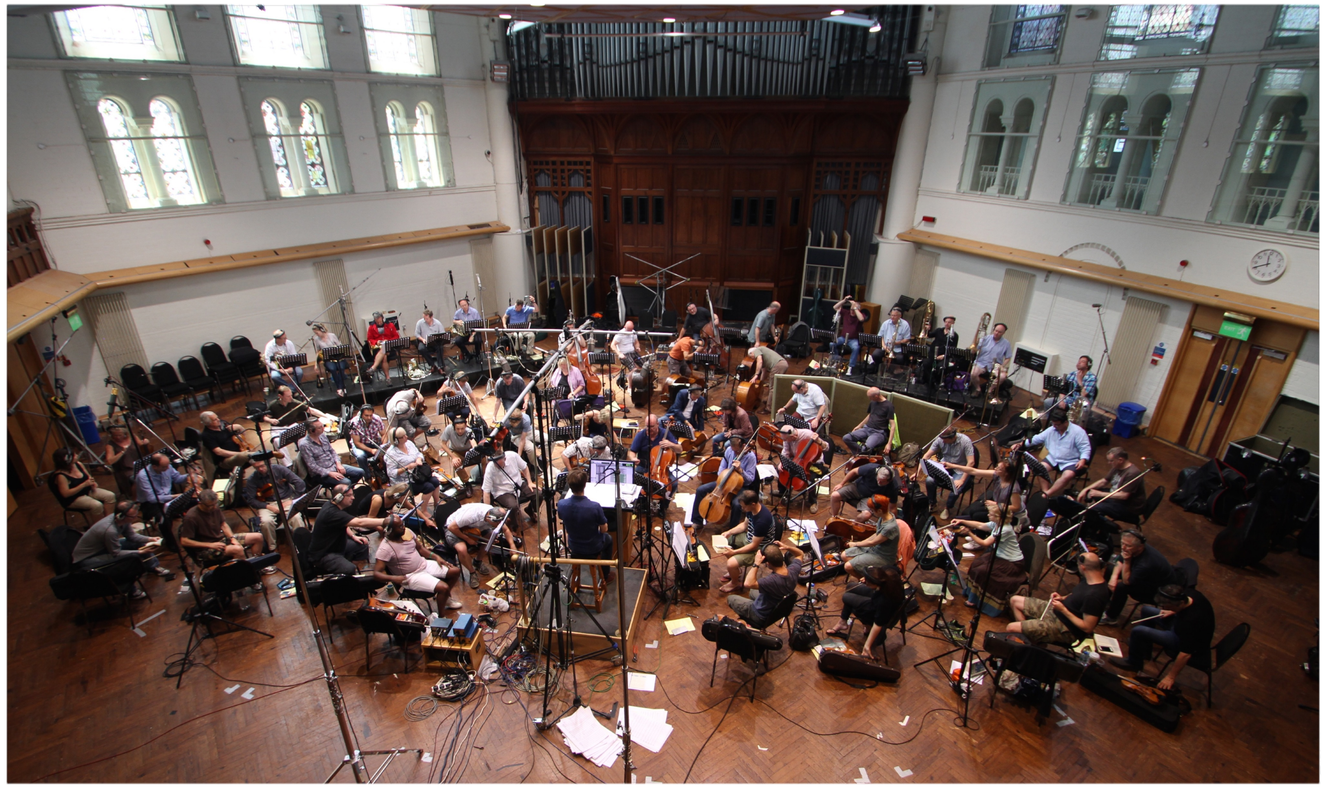
# Musician Line-up

**Strings**
12 Violin I
10 Violin II
8 Viola
8 Cello
6 Bass

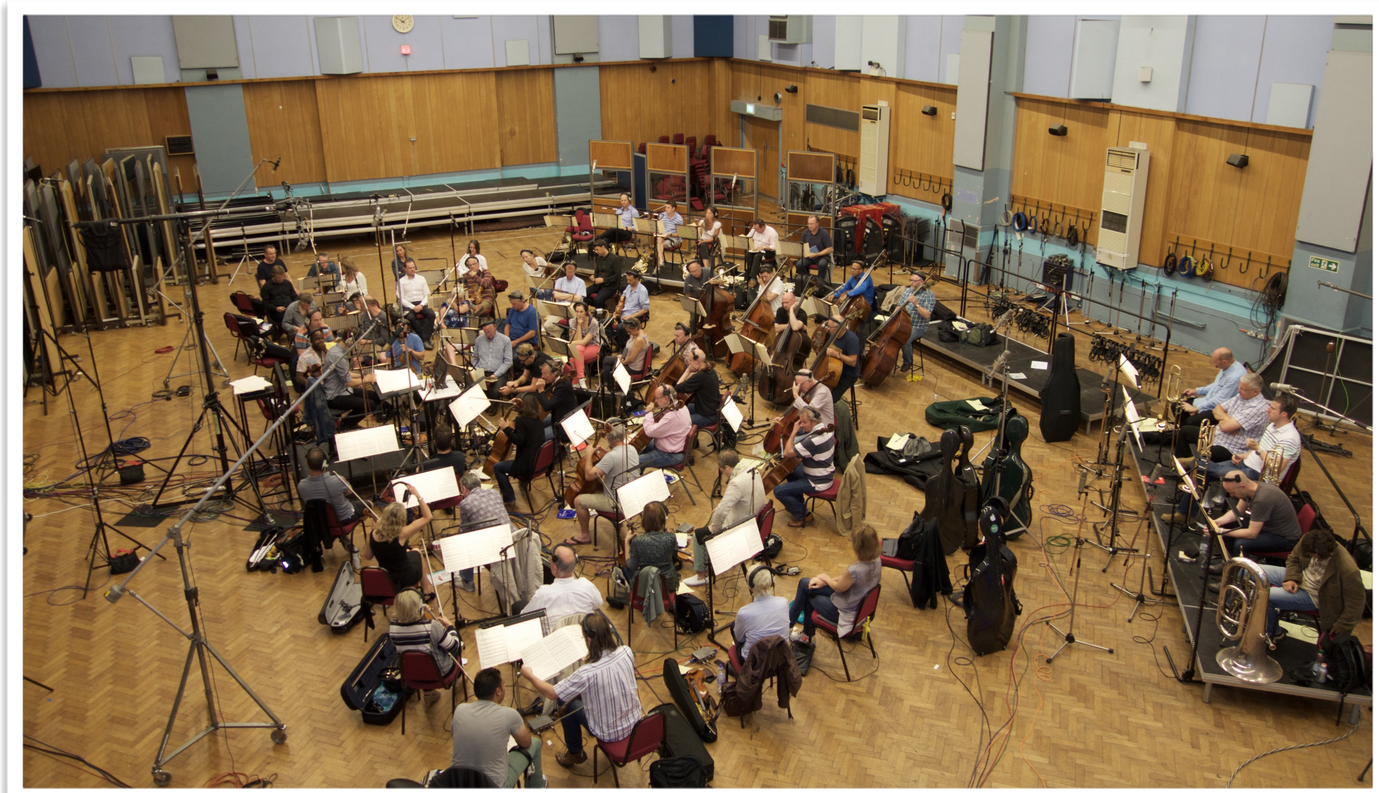
**Brass**
6 Horns
4 Trombones
1 Cimbasso

**Choir**
8 Soprano
8 Alto
8 Tenor
8 Bass

**Percussion**
Timpani
Chimes



# AIR Studios London



# Abbey Road Studios London

# PENKA KOUNEVA

## Lead Orchestrator for Game Score

The Hunter

Yharnam

# Use of Music in the Game

- Game Load
- Boss Battles
- Hub where the player rests, the “Hunter’s Dream”.

The Hunter's Dream

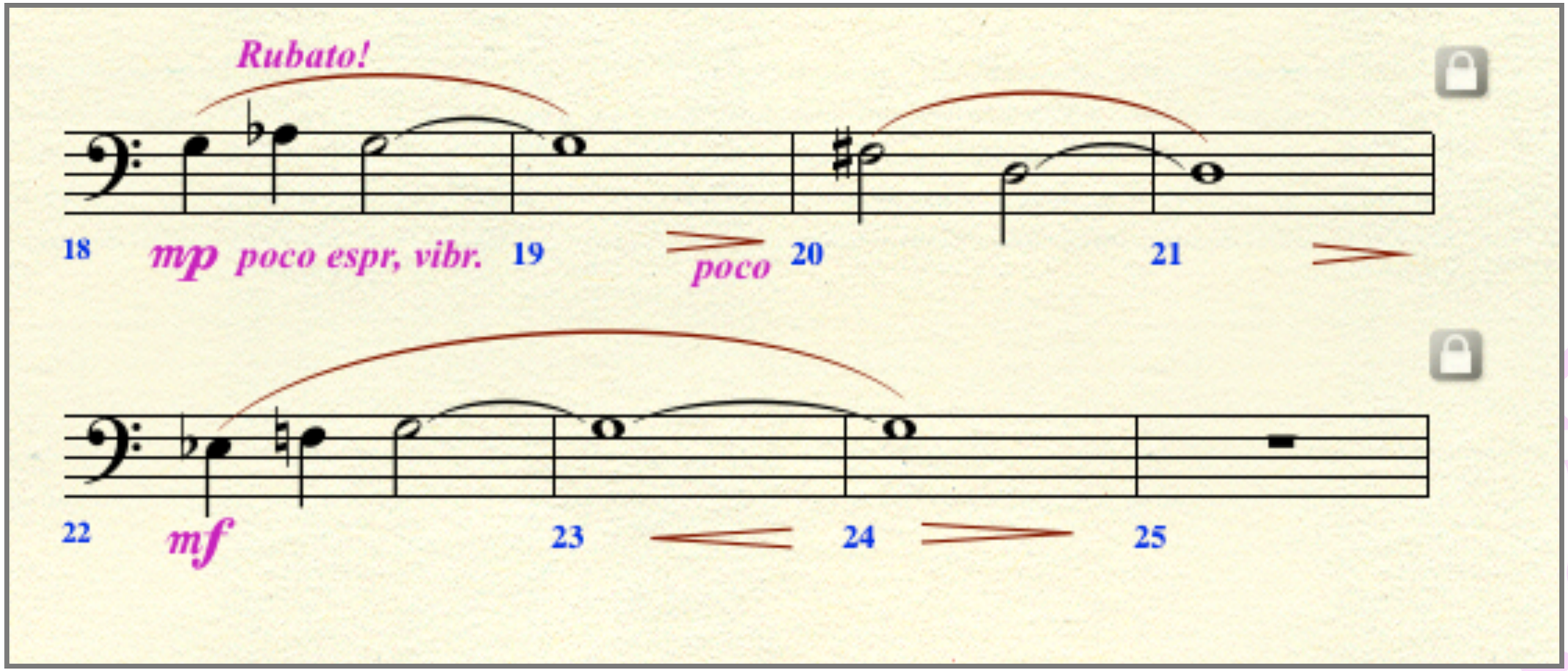
# Extended Orchestral Techniques

- Clusters
- Aleatoric Techniques
- Tremolos
- Layered Dissonant Harmony
- Rhythmic Ostinatos
- Soaring Melodic Lines

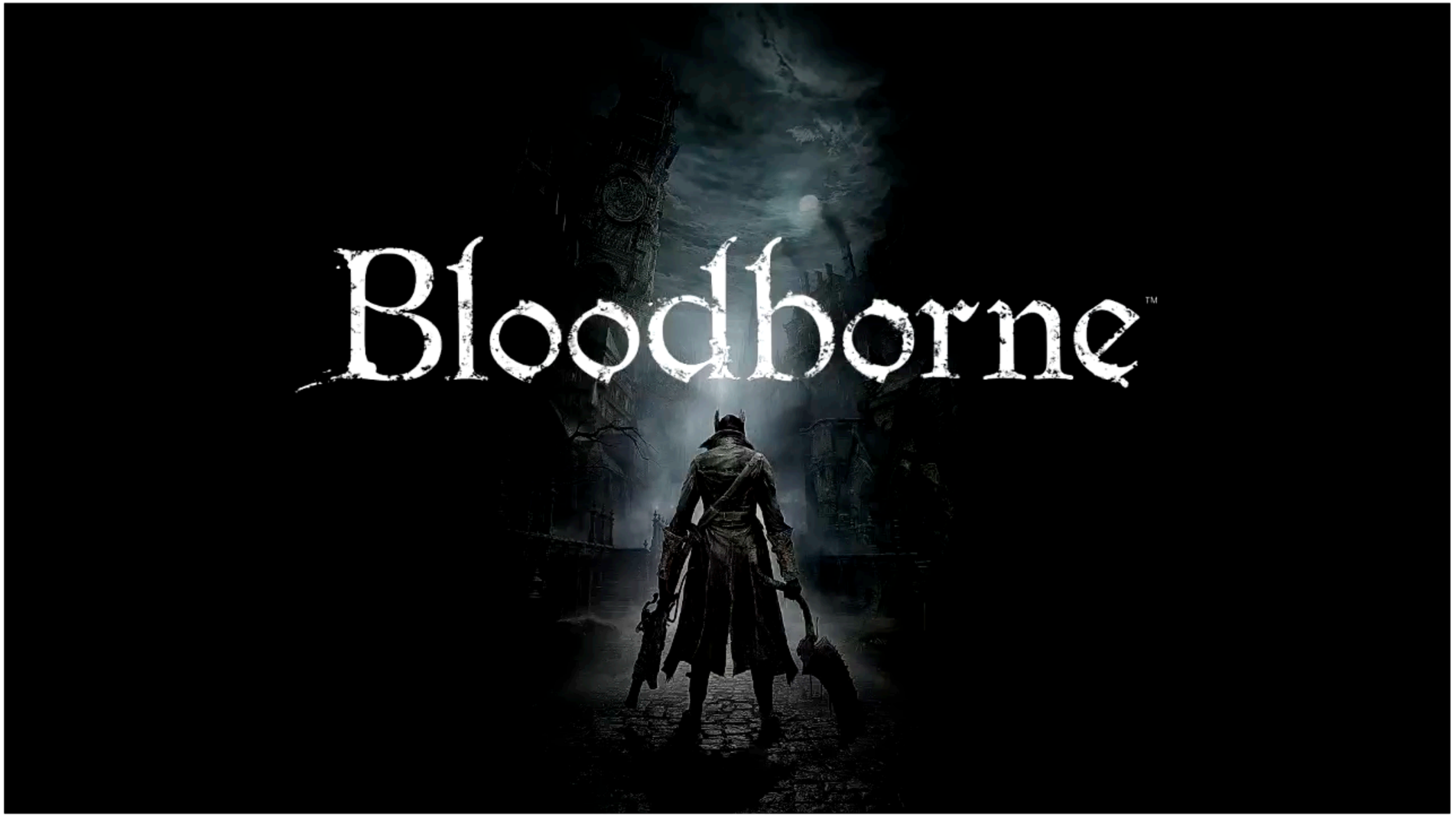
# Main Title – Signature Elements

- Composed by Ryan Amon.
- Mournful theme in cello.
- “Pounding” tones in berimbau, brass, and perc.
- Soprano soloist.
- String and choir clusters and effects.

# Main Theme – Solo Cello Theme



# Berimbau – a Latin American String Instrument


Bloodborne™

# Orchestration Approaches

- 2 passes with the strings (melodic lines and rhythmic ostinatos).
- Reinforced low brass, 2 tenor trombones, bass trombone, contrabass tbn, cimbasso, tuba.
- Orchestral FX remained on samples.

# General Characteristics - Choir

- Use of large, prominent 32-person SATB choir.
- Choir divisi – from 3-note chords to 8-note dissonant chords.
- Vocal effects (clusters, slides, murmurs).

# Ebrietas, Daughter Of the Cosmos

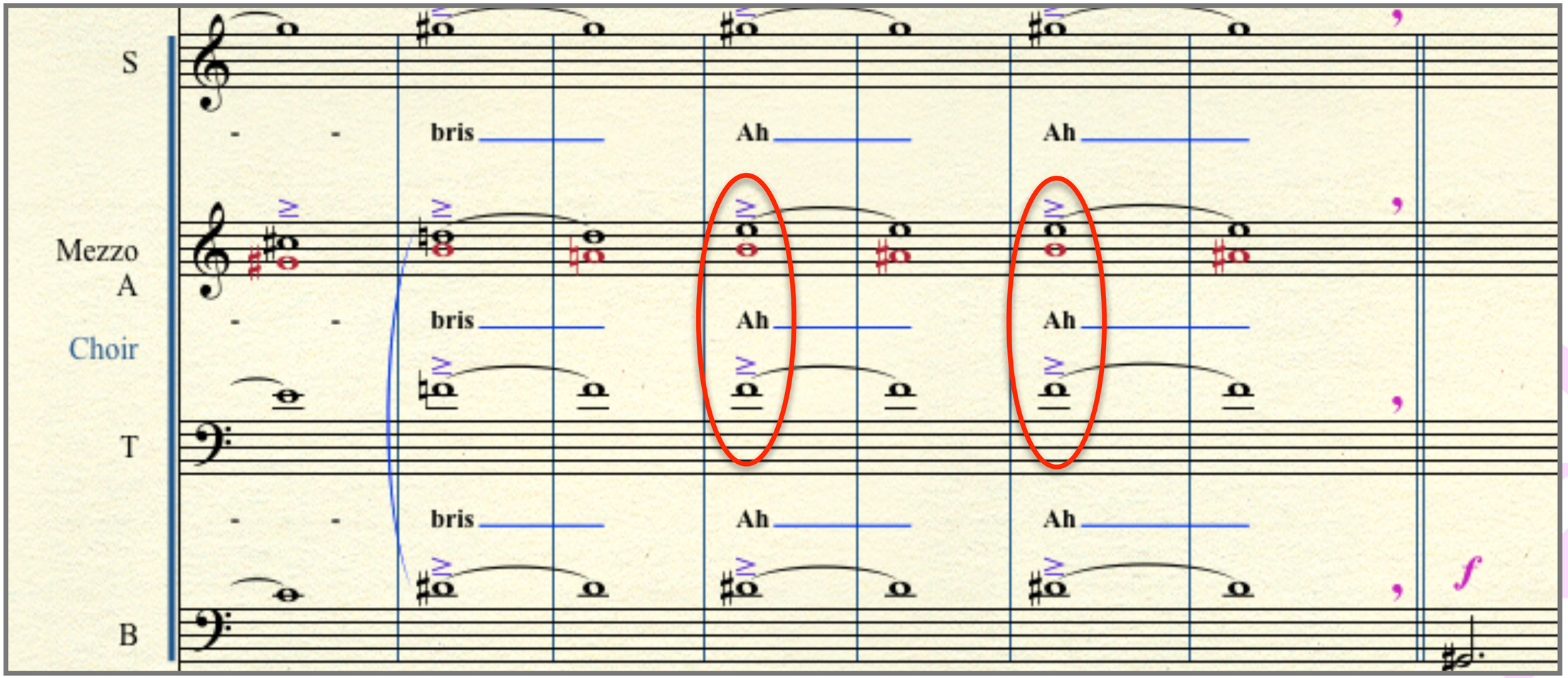
# Ebrietas, Daughter Of the Cosmos

- Composed by Yuka Kitamura
- Who is Ebrietas? Difficult to beat boss.
- Monster slug with a squid-like tentacles.
- Bears resemblance to the Chulhu imagery.
- Celestial child.

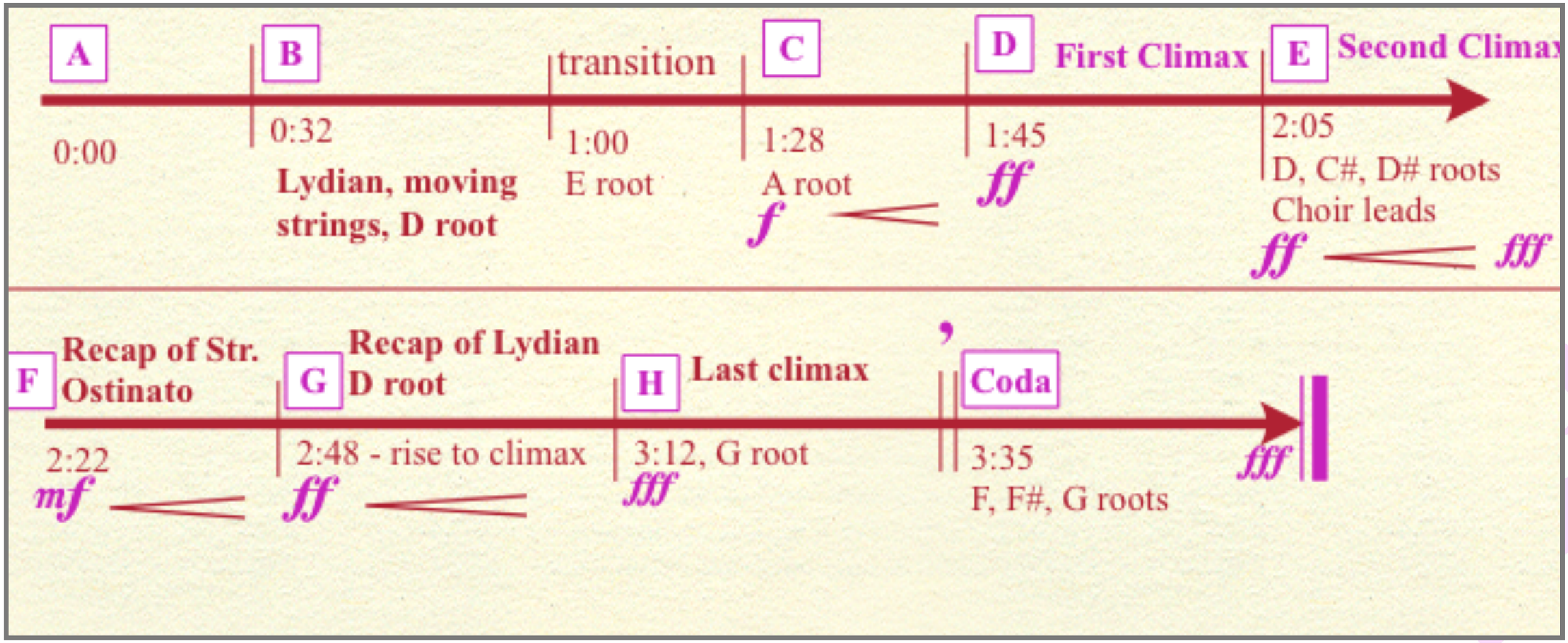
# Ebrietas – Signature Features

- Through-composed form (no recap of motives).
- Choir dominates the sound.
- Harmonic syntax – polychords, seventh chords, modal harmony, stacked $7^{th}$ dissonances.
- Multiple climactic sections.

# Ebrietas – Dissonant Harmony at 2:14



# Ebrietas – Form and Structure

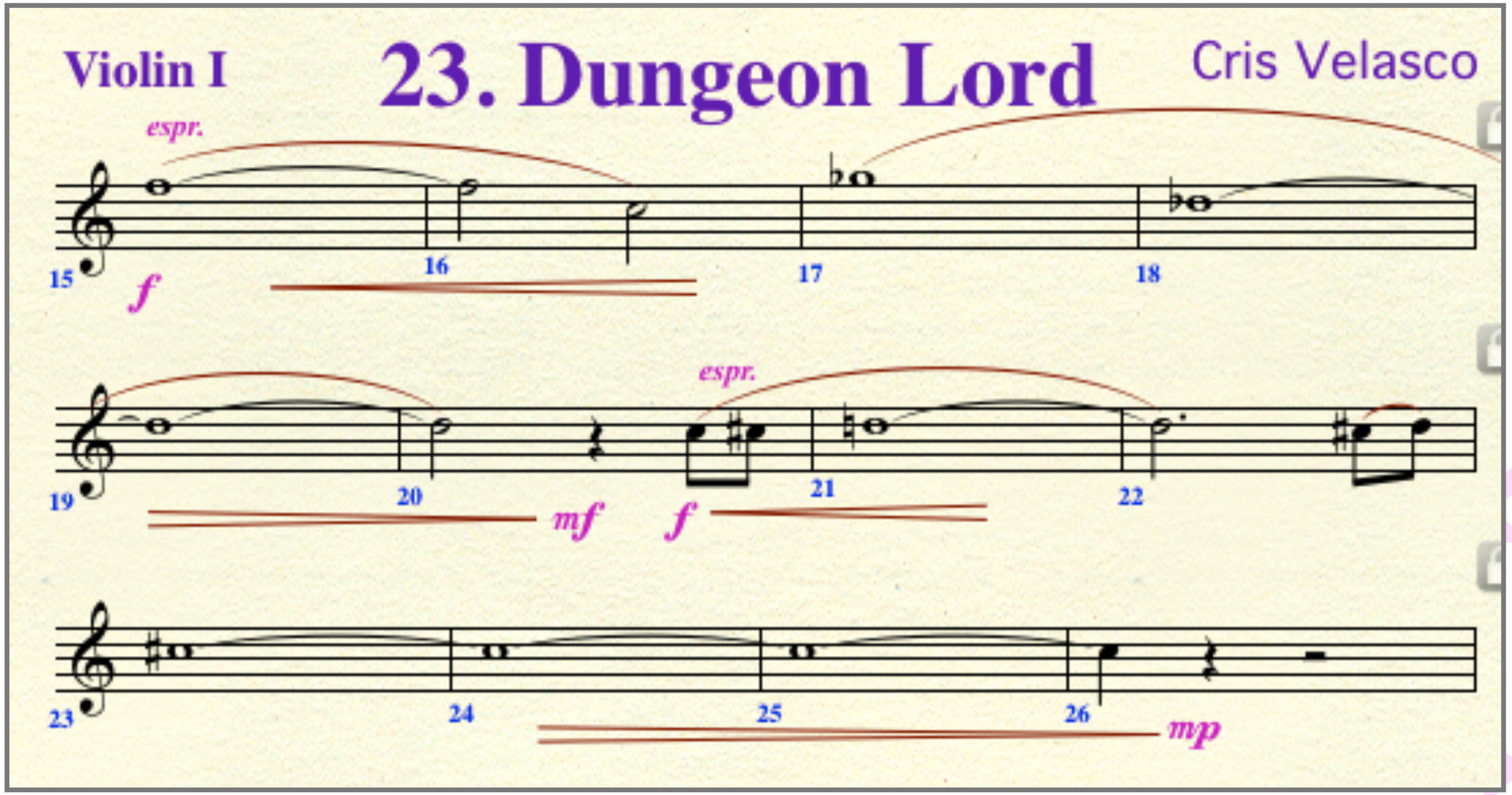


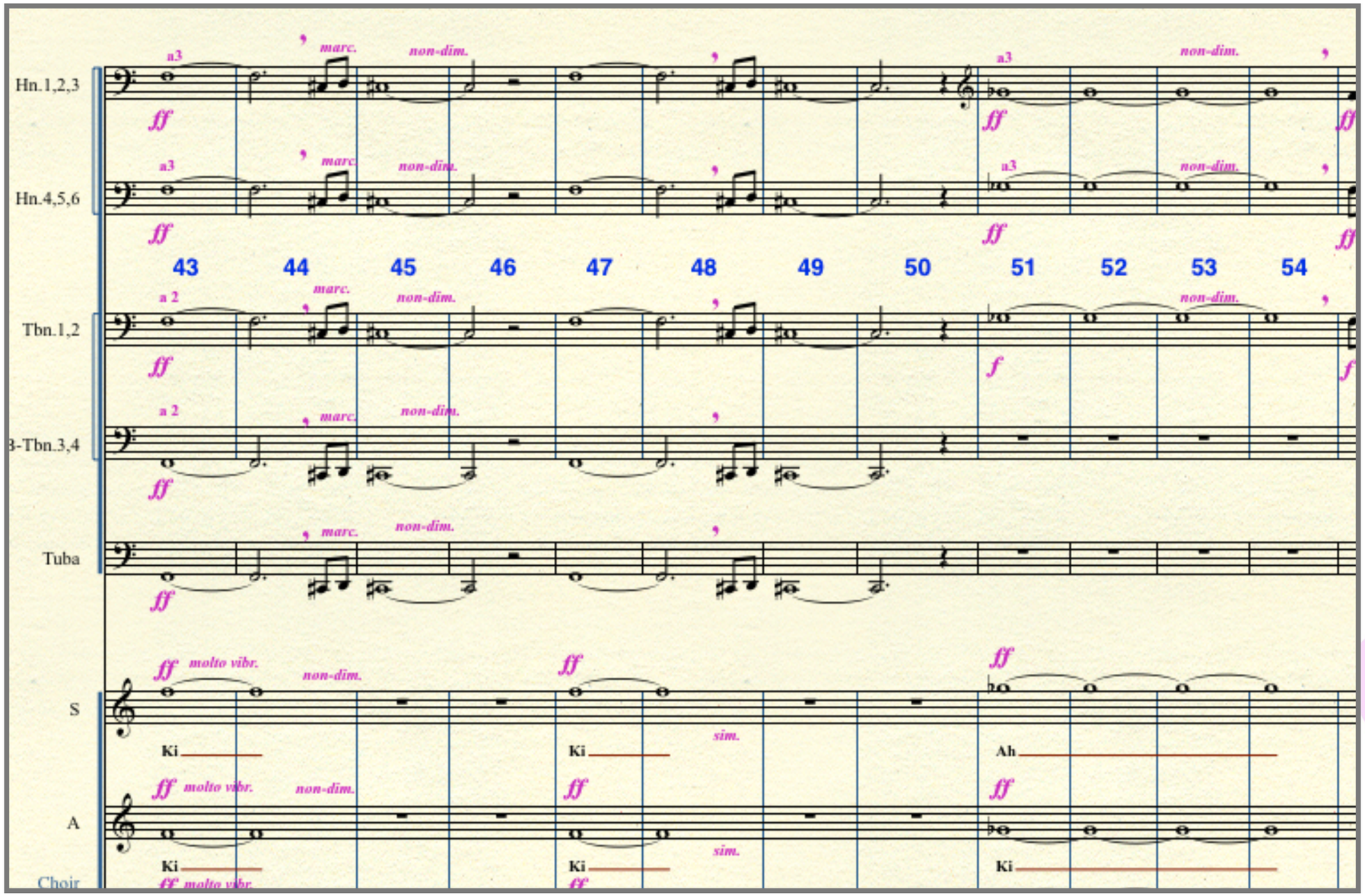
13
20
Beckoning Bell
0
23
Ebrietas, Daughter of the Cosmos

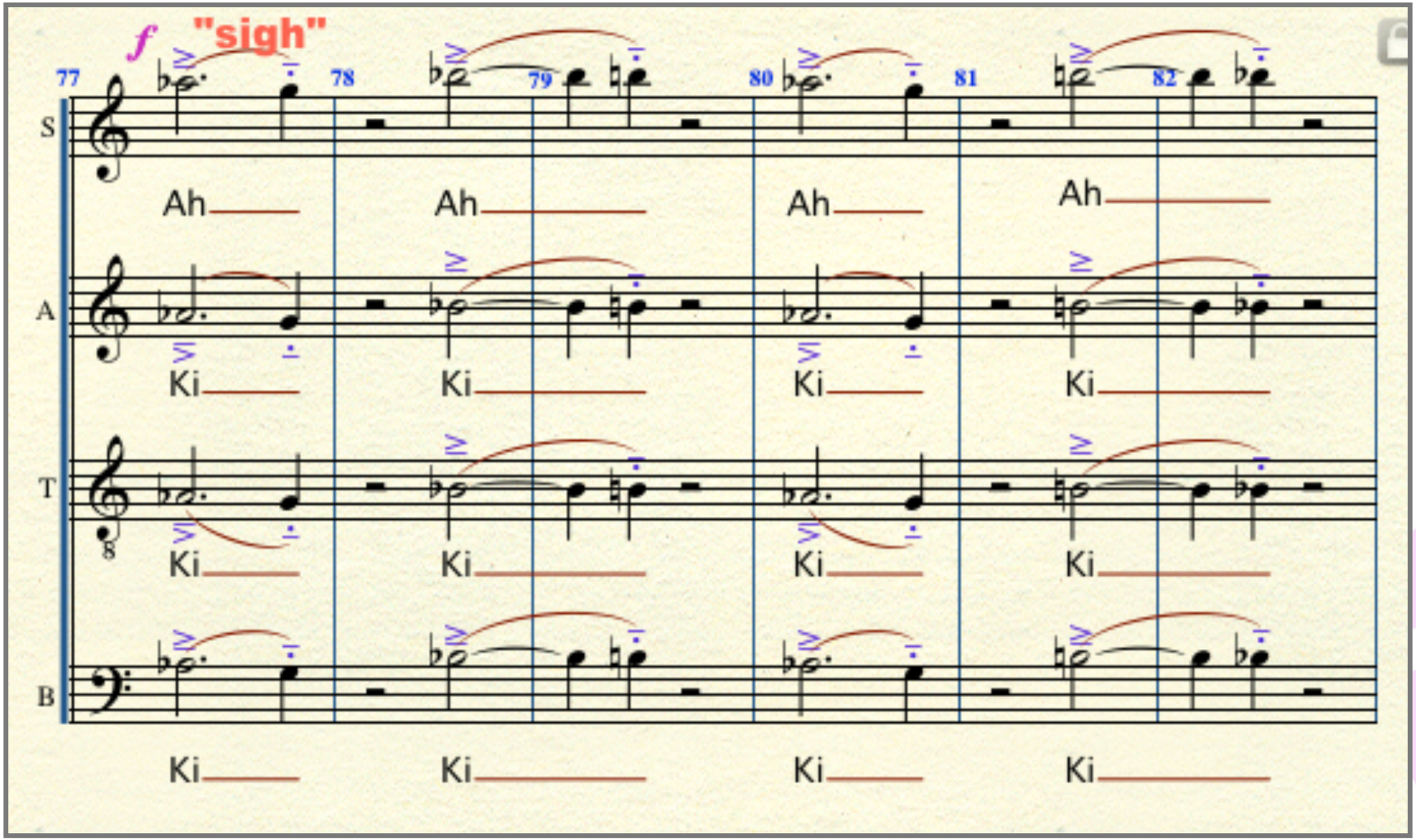
# Watchdog of the Old Lords

# Watchdog of the Old Lords

- Composed by Cris Velasco
- In the Soundtrack, the piece is titled "**Terror**".
- In the game it's used for the Chalice Dungeon bosses.


Violin I
23. Dungeon Lord
Cris Velasco
espr.
15
16
17
18
f
19
20
21
22
espr.
mf
f
23
24
25
26
mp


Hn.1,2,3
Hn.4,5,6
43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54
Tbn.1,2
3-Tbn.3,4
Tuba
S
A
Choir
a3
a 2
marc.
non-dim.
molto vibr.
sim.
Ki
Ah


f "sigh"
77
78
79
80
81
82
S
A
T
B
Ah
Ki

15
20
10
Molotov Cocktail
3467
16

# JIM FOWLER

## Lead Orchestrator for DLC

# Contents

1. Comparison of Original & DLC Recording Sessions
2. Retaining the Established Orchestral Sound
3. The Orphan of Kos - from MIDI Mock Up to Recording
4. Summary

# RECORDING SESSIONS

Bloodborne

- Five Orchestral Sessions (18 hours total)
- Three Choral Sessions (9 hours total)

Bloodborne - The Old Hunters

- One Orchestral Session (4 hours total)
- One Choral Session (2 hours total)

# RETAINING THE ORCHESTRAL SOUND

Foreground

- Thematic Material

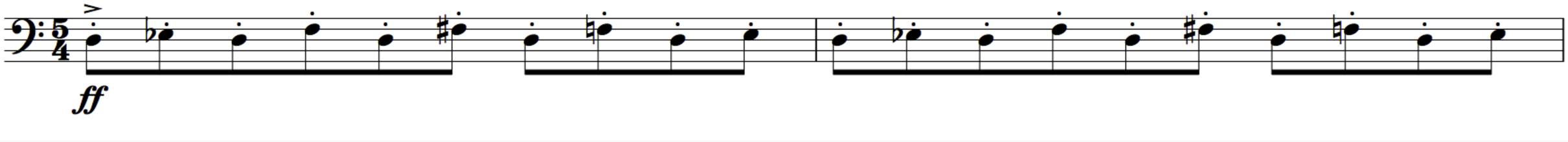
Middleground

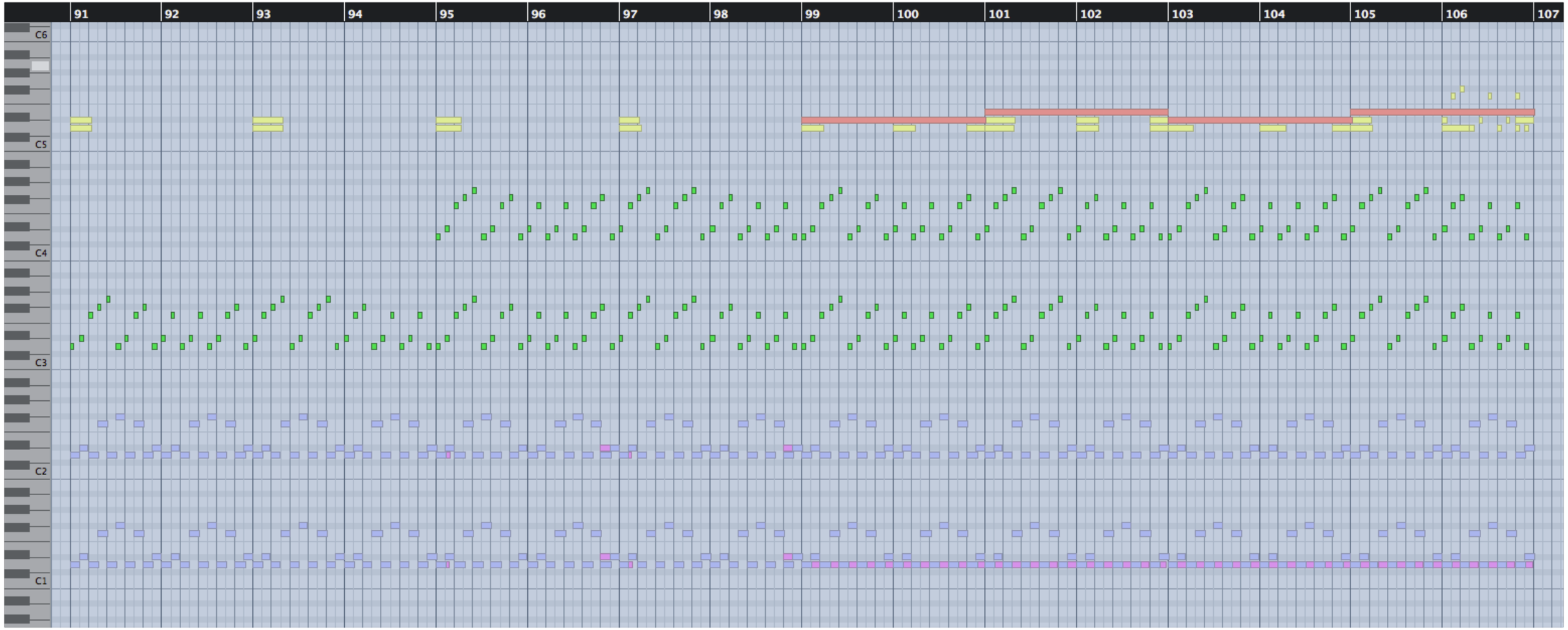
- Counter Melody & Accompanying Figures

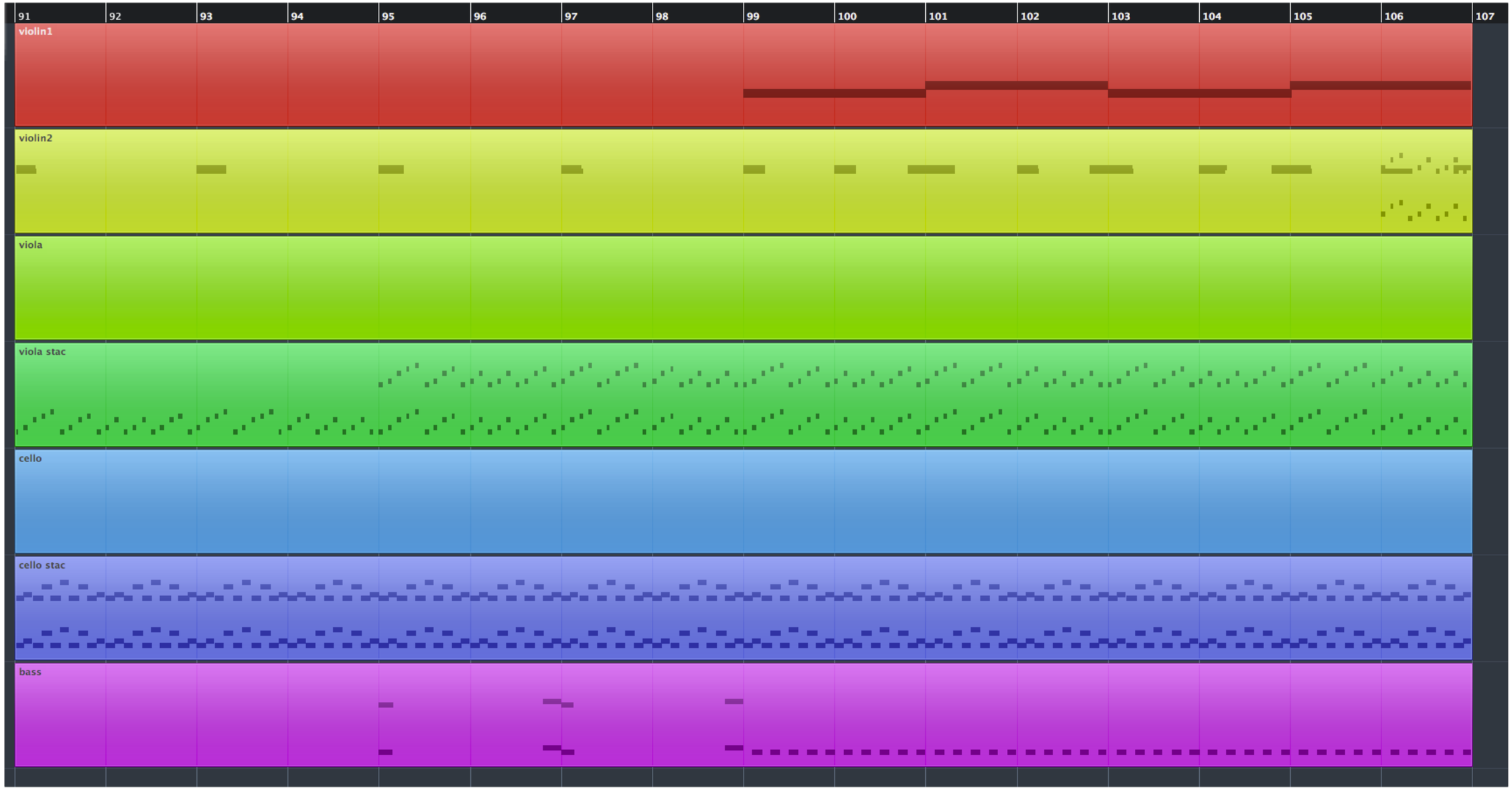
Background

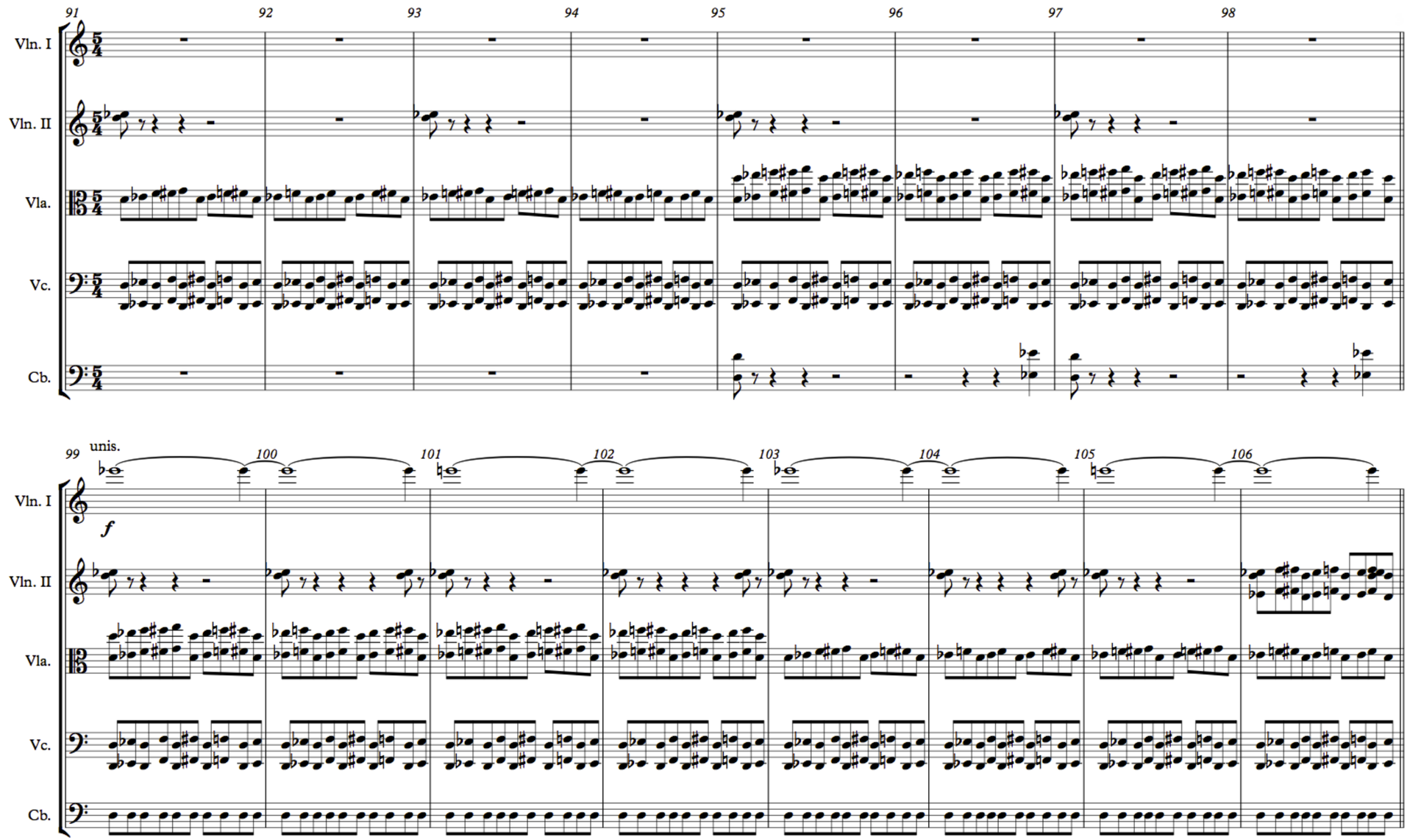
- Harmonic Support & Supporting Effects

# OSTINATO




91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
C6
C5
C4
C3
C2
C1

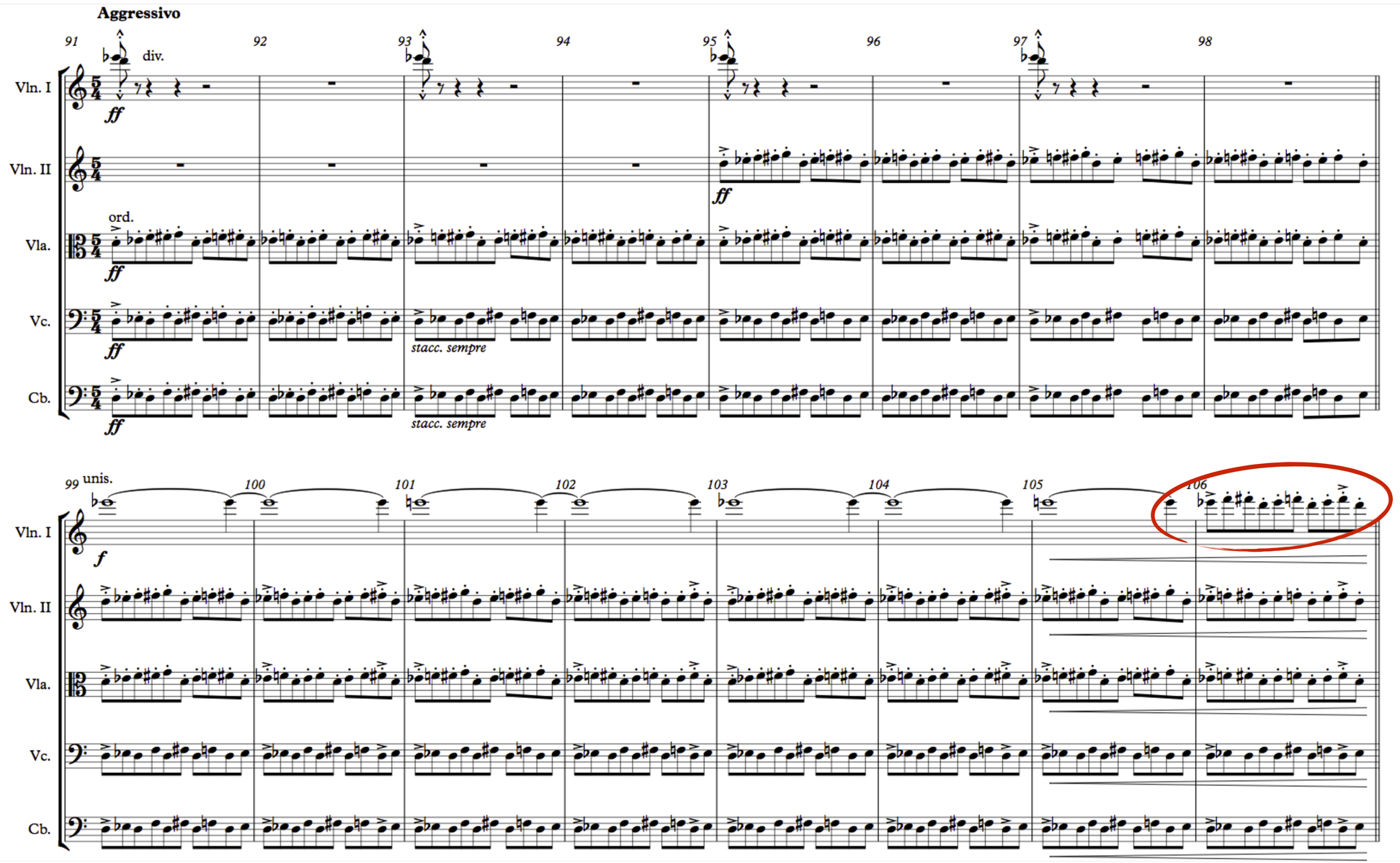

91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
violin1
violin2
viola
viola stac
cello
cello stac
bass

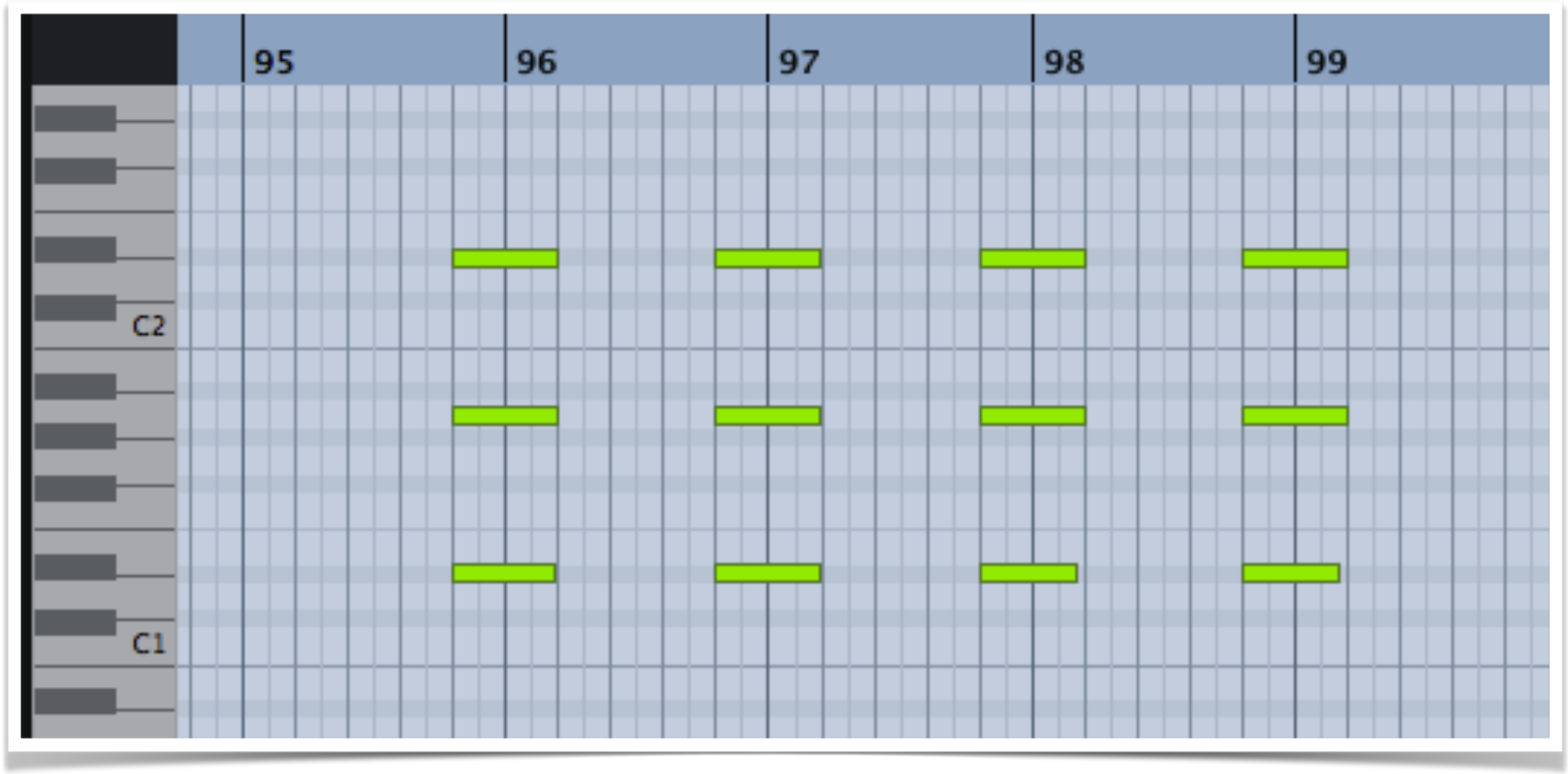

91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
99
unis.
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
f

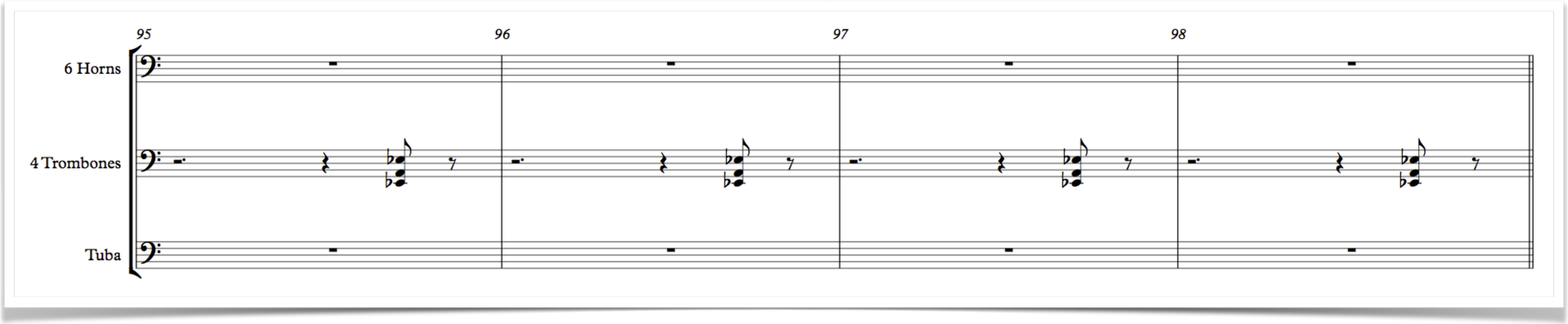
95
96
97
98
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

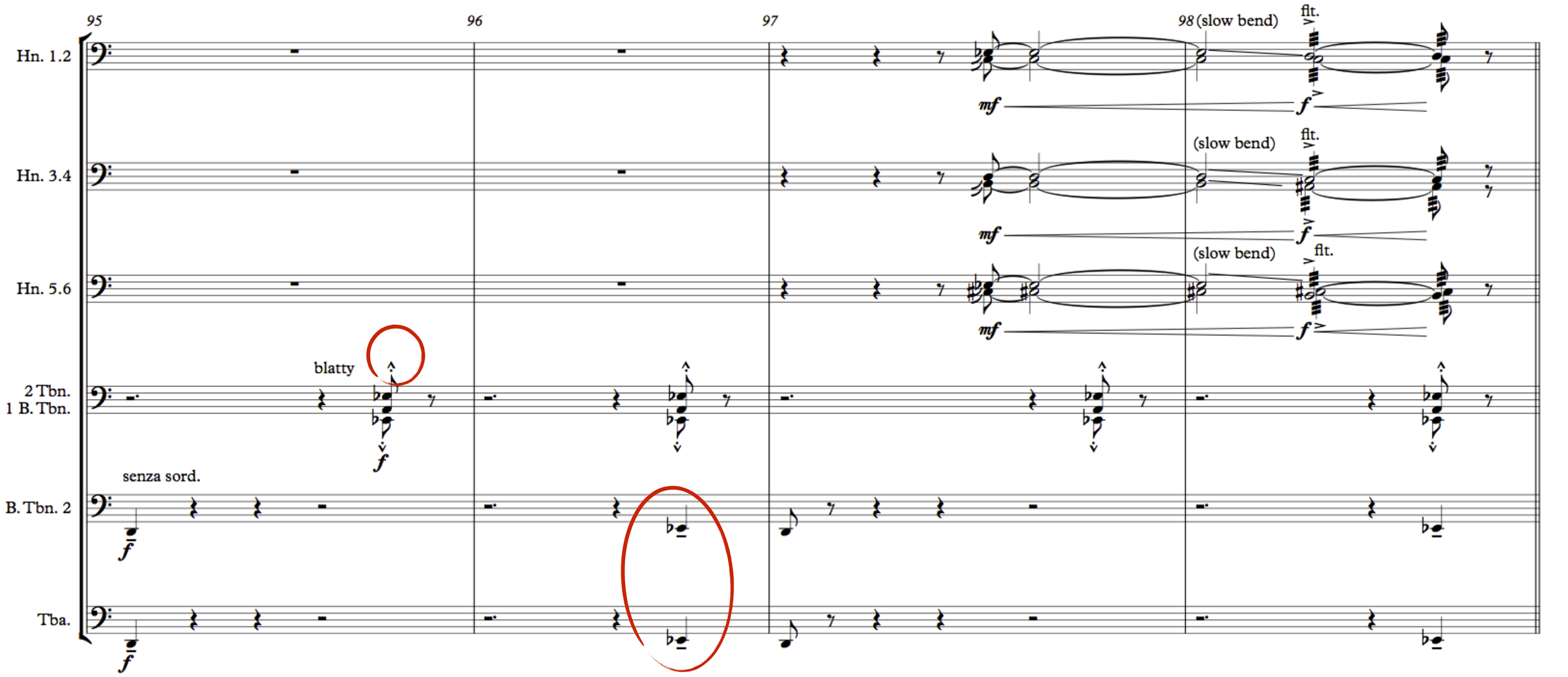
# Mockup of *The Orphan of Kos*

Aggressivo
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
div.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ff
ord.
stacc. sempre
99
unis.
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
f


Aggressivo
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
div.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
ff
ord.
stacc. sempre
99
unis.
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
f


95
96
97
98
99
C2
C1


95
96
97
98
6 Horns
4 Trombones
Tuba


95
96
97
98 (slow bend)
flt.
Hn. 1.2
Hn. 3.4
Hn. 5.6
2 Tbn.
1 B. Tbn.
B. Tbn. 2
Tba.
mf
f
(slow bend)
blatty
senza sord.

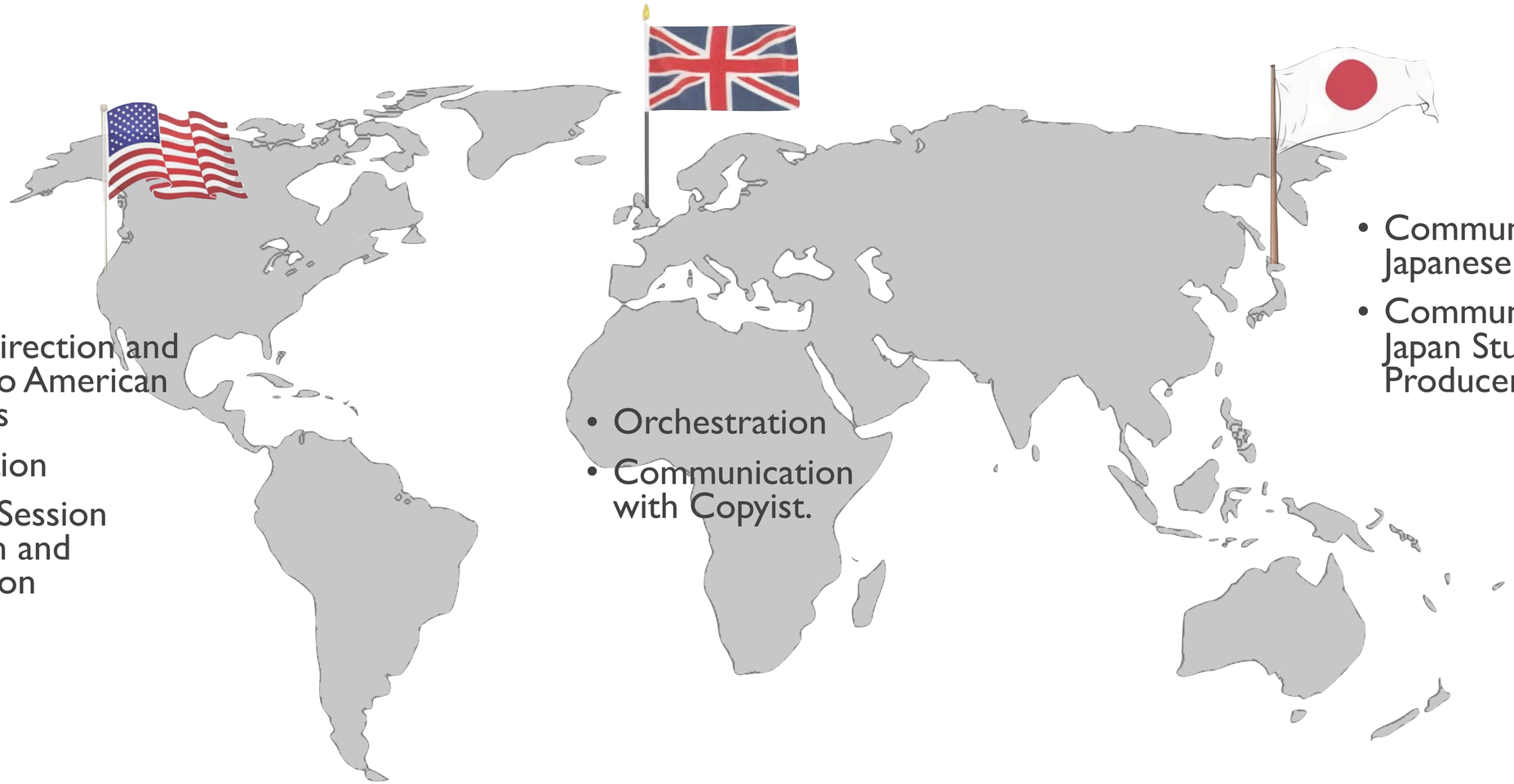
# SUMMARY

Listen & Look

Arrange (within reason)

The Orchestra is a single instrument

# Global Production
# Regional Responsibilities



- Creative Direction and Feedback to American Composers
- Orchestration
- Recording Session Supervision and Coordination

- Orchestration
- Communication with Copyist.

- Communication with Japanese Composers
- Communication with Japan Studio Producers

oduction

Abbey Road Studios
SIR
EDWARD
ELGAR
COMPOSER
Abbey Road Studios

# Q&A